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EDITORIAL COMMENT

THE NURSING WAR CRISIS

The situation in the nursing field which has arisen in consequence of the participation of this country in the war is presented in the Red Cross Department, this month, by Miss Delano and Miss Noyes, and in the Department of Nursing Education by Miss Stewart. Even now this JOURNAL, the officers of the American Nurses' Association, The League of Nursing Education in New York City, the National Emergency Nursing Committee of New York City, and leading women in many cities are giving definite coöperation in developing plans to meet it, but active participation in these plans is needed from every member of the nursing body if we are to pass through this crisis in such a manner that the sick in this country, as well as the soldiers in their camps here and in Europe, may be cared for, and that nursing standards may be higher and not lower when the peace of the world is again restored.

In order to meet these needs, greater numbers of nurses must be trained and graduated in the immediate future. In the July JOURNAL we enumerated some of the steps being taken to induce greater numbers of patriotic women who are desirous of serving their country in this crisis, to enter our well established schools. A reduction in the length of the course of training from three years to two is being offered, by many of these schools, to college graduates. A special appeal is being sent by the New York City League to young women that they should enter the profession. This is being distributed by the Macmillan Company as a folder sent out with its mail. Nurses who are giving instruction in Red Cross classes, preparing women for nurses' aides, should take the opportunity of putting before them the great field of patriotic service which nursing offers at the present time. These same instructors should not fail to impress upon members of

their classes the fact that the instruction so given does not in any way fit them to take the place of trained nurses. It is intended, first of all, to make them better able to care for minor illnesses in their own homes or to make them intelligent assistants to trained nurses either at home or in war hospitals, if their services are needed.

The first people to recognize the necessity for increasing our numerical strength were our leaders in the Red Cross Nursing Service. Following a meeting of the Central Committee on Red Cross Nursing Service, held in New York in June, an appeal was made to the president of the American Nurses' Association that measures should be taken to admit immediately waiting applicants so that they might become eligible for enrollment in the Red Cross. Miss Goodrich summoned the secretary to a conference without delay, and decided that as, in the reorganization now in progress, the burden of responsibility is to be placed upon the states, the best way to reach the scattered nurses of the country who are not yet members of the American Nurses' Association, would be through the states, themselves, such state membership making them automatically members of the American Nurses' Association and meeting that requirement for enrollment in the Red Cross Nursing Service. Accordingly, telegrams were sent to the secretaries of affiliated state associations, setting forth the need of the Red Cross for a larger enrollment and urging that special meetings be held of either the association or its directors, to admit waiting applicants.

To those who are not familiar with the requirements of the Red Cross Nursing Service, we may sum them up as follows:

First, Evidence of graduation from a school of nursing in a general hospital which includes the care of men, gives at least two years of training and has a daily average of at least fifty patients. Nurses graduated from hospitals for the insane must have had nine months of general training during or after their special training.

Second, Registration.

Third, An age within the limits of twenty-five and forty.

Fourth, Membership in some organization (state, county or alumnae), affiliated with the American Nurses' Association, endorsement by the officers of that association, by the superintendent of her school, and by the committee which enrolls her.

Fifth, Physical fitness.

The requirement regarding the size of the hospital in which a nurse has been trained was made necessary by experience which showed that under the strain and stress of army hospital conditions, a nurse must be familiar with the procedures necessary in handling large numbers of people, there being no opportunity at the front for supply-

ing this experience to one who lacks it, however excellent may be her care of the individual patient.

More than half the affiliated state associations have sent replies to Miss Goodrich's telegram, stating what steps they are taking to meet the request of the American Nurses' Association. Only one showed indifference, all the rest are hard at work solving the problem in their own way. For instance: Arkansas held a state meeting at which all eligible applicants were admitted, while others were accepted conditionally; California telegraphed back that it was admitting new county associations in order to increase the Red Cross enrollment; Delaware was giving special publicity to its coming state meeting; Florida had sent notices through the press and would call a meeting soon of its credential committee; Kansas was making provision for admitting new members; Massachusetts appointed a special committee to act on applications between the councillors' meetings; Michigan's Executive Board held a special meeting for redistricting the state, admitting all eligible members and urging Red Cross enrollment; Minnesota had held special meetings and will hold more; Missouri was campaigning for members; Nebraska's executive committee would take action; New Hampshire called a special meeting and arranged to act on applications weekly; Ohio planned for special meetings before the annual meeting then nearly due; Pennsylvania called a special meeting to elect new members and to arrange for further coöperation with the American Nurses' Association; Wisconsin called a special meeting and will call others as needed.

Four states made at once a thorough canvass. Connecticut, the first of all to respond, after a five days' campaign, in which special attention was given to the places not ordinarily reached, held a special state meeting at which 41 members were admitted. In Rhode Island, every alumnae association was asked to look up graduates who do not belong to the state association but who are eligible to the Red Cross, and to report to the state officers on a specified day. Utah sent a letter to every nurse in the state asking definitely whether she would enroll in the Red Cross. Virginia had a meeting of its directors on the day the telegram was received at which a special state meeting was planned for. Every nurse in the state was invited to this meeting, whether or not a member of the state association. With the invitation went a census card, admirably comprehensive and concise, to be filled in by the individual and returned.

In the midst of this period of storm and stress, another duty confronts us, that of ascertaining the nursing resources of the country. If all the laws for state registration were compulsory this would be a

comparatively simple matter, but as only a few of the 46 laws are compulsory, to make a census with any degree of accuracy is almost an impossibility. We know through the reports of the state boards of examiners that there are about 70,000 nurses registered with them. If our state laws were compulsory, this number would represent all of the professionally trained women in the United States, but as it is, it probably represents about one-fourth of the total number. This is particularly trying because it is not the fault of nurses, but of legislators, and they represent the men who now need our services.

Perhaps the problem of getting an accurate census is greatest in New York City, but fortunately the matter there has been taken up by the Nursing section of the Mayor's Committee on Home Defense. It is to include not only registered, graduate and trained nurses, but practical nurses and attendants. For this purpose blanks have been sent out to all institutions employing nurses of any kind, to all training schools for nurses, to all directories, both professional and commercial, and to all associations of nurses. Many names will be duplicated in these lists, but a salaried secretary is employed who is making a card index in which the name will appear but once.

A special letter in regard to the making of a census, which officers of state associations will have received before this JOURNAL is issued, calls for immediate action.

It is possible that, before the war is ended, nurses in this country may have to meet some of the difficulties that have confronted those in other warring countries, especially England, and that there may be a tendency to set aside trained nurses and to give greater recognition to women of social prestige and wealth. Should this situation confront us, we must be even-tempered and well-mannered in order to maintain the respect due our profession. We can hardly expect at one bound to attain the full professional recognition that has been denied us in the past. If we can go through these experiences with unvarying courtesy, we shall better prove our professional value.

THE APPEAL OF THE COMMITTEE ON NURSING

The National Emergency Committee on Nursing whose formation and purpose was described in the last issue of the JOURNAL has since then changed its status and has now become the Committee on Nursing of the General Medical Board of the Council of National Defense. Among the other committees of the Medical Board are those on Hospitals, Medical Schools, and Public Hygiene. The personnel of the Committee remains unchanged, but the names of Lillian D. Wald and

Dr. William H. Welch, omitted in error from the previous report, should be added to those mentioned in the JOURNAL. It will be noted that this Committee is not made up purely of nurses, but includes in its membership physicians, educators and social workers. The nurses of the country are represented through the presidents of the three national associations. The purpose of the committee is not altered. In a large general sense it is concerned with the supply of nurses for home as well as for war defense, and with instituting effective measures to increase that supply. It is therefore appealing not only to college women but to the hundred thousand young women who have recently graduated from high and technical schools, and from good private schools, and carefully prepared letters and circulars are being sent to them. In addition to this propaganda, the Committee is arranging for further publicity through articles, etc., and is urging forward every possible effort to increase the supply of good candidates for admission to our training schools in order that the depletion of our ranks (never adequately supplied with workers even in peace) may not reach a point which would be disastrous to the welfare of the sick in this country. To take the place of the thousands of nurses now being withdrawn from service here, we need not a few hundred but thousands more students entering our hospital training schools.

In order that this campaign may not fail of satisfactory results, the Committee is trying to secure the fullest possible coöperation from hospital and training school authorities in meeting this national emergency. It is urging every hospital to go as far beyond the provision of students for its own working needs, as is practicable, and to try to secure temporary housing accommodation and a temporary increase in instructors and supervisors for a considerably larger number of students. The Committee realizes that most hospitals have abundant clinical resources which they cannot make available for teaching purposes because of lack of means to provide housing and instruction for more students, and it is advising that students with good homes in the vicinity should temporarily be allowed to live at home, and that suitable adjustments of hours of duty should be made to permit this. A careful consideration of the whole question of the long hours of duty, which more than any other factor keeps good candidates out of training schools, is being urged by the Committee at this time. The Committee considers that ways and means must be found of helping hospitals with good teaching facilities to enlarge their training schools, and it is concerned with efforts in that direction. Further reports of plans and of work, as they develop and are carried on, will be presented in the JOURNAL and inquiries for information will be answered by the

Secretary of the Committee, Ella P. Crandall, Council of National Defense, Munsey Building, Washington, D. C.

The following letter has been sent by the Committee to graduates of nurse training schools of the present year:

The nursing profession which you have just entered is facing the gravest responsibility and the greatest opportunity of its whole history. The country is calling upon us to undertake a gigantic task, which is going to mean life or death, for many thousands of our fellow countrymen. In every war, especially in this most terrible of all wars, we know that there is bound to be a heavy mortality and much inevitable suffering, but we have every evidence to show that where there is an efficient medical service and an ample supply of highly trained and capable nurses, a much larger margin of lives can be saved, and the terrible crippling and maiming of human beings can be very much reduced. This country is more fortunate than most in having, trained and ready in this national crisis, a large army of professional nurses on whom it can call. It is looking to us, and the mothers and friends of our men in particular are trusting to us, to see to it that the wounded of our armies shall have the very best nursing care that trained skill and modern science can give. 10,000 of our best nurses have already answered the call and have enrolled for active service with the Red Cross, but it is probable that we shall need many more, perhaps double that number, to care for the larger new army which will soon be ready to go to France. But we must not for one moment forget that every nurse so enrolled may be taken away from a post where she is at work and is urgently needed. Our problem therefore is how to answer the call for service abroad and to fill the hundreds of vacant places here, which those who go leave behind them. It would be disastrous if we should let our hospitals here suffer for lack of competent nurses, particularly for lack of superintendents and supervisors and teachers who are needed to train the younger generations of nurses. It would be a very short-sighted policy also to allow our public health organizations and all the established activities for the prevention of disease, to run down now, when we will have so many dependent families to care for and when conditions are so much more favorable for the breaking down of resistance (especially among children) and the spread of disease. To prevent the serious crippling of all these important branches of nursing work, which would result if any large number of our experienced and specially trained women should be called away, the Committee on Nursing is turning to the younger graduates and those who have not yet established themselves in responsible positions, asking that they should fill up the ranks of the Red Cross, and should enroll as rapidly as possible, making their services immediately available so that we may know how many we have to depend upon for the future as well as the present need. Those who are not eligible for enrollment or who for other reasons cannot volunteer for active service abroad, should resolutely put aside all personal preferences, and should consider very carefully the fields of nursing work in which their services are most urgently needed. In this crisis no nurse should remain idle, even when she is awaiting her call from the Red Cross, and no one should remain in a position which could be as well filled by some one without a nurse's training. Nurses who are in the employ of private individuals, where their services are more or less of a luxury, should be released for the care of those who are more acutely ill, or they should

throw their energies into some of the many forms of public service, where nursing experience and training are so greatly needed. If every available nurse in this country can be counted on to put her best effort into meeting these immediate and vital needs, there is little doubt that we can win through, without breaking down the standards of nursing which we have been such long years in building up, and without sacrificing the thousands of valuable lives which in other wars and under other conditions have been so pitifully muddled away for lack of the training and experience in nursing which it is now in our power to give. This in itself is enough reward, but we will also have the tremendous satisfaction of knowing that when the freedom of the world was at stake and our country needed us, she found us ready, and when she gave us a place of honor in the first ranks of national defense, we did not fail, but kept our ranks full and measured up to the splendid traditions of service which we inherit from many generations of nurses. The Committee on Nursing sends you this message to remind you that your profession is looking to you to uphold those traditions—that your country is depending upon you for the best and fullest service you know how to give.

VICTIMS OF WAR

While we know that Red Cross hospitals are usually situated in protected places, we must be prepared for loss by death or illness of some of the nurses who are going out so quietly and so cheerfully, showing the same patriotic courage and fortitude of which we are proud in our young men.

We have already recorded in the July JOURNAL, the deaths of two Red Cross Nurses, on the S. S. *Mongolia*, as they were setting forth for service abroad, and we gave the account, sent us by the Evanston Hospital Alumnae, of the military funeral given to one of them, Helen Wood. No direct news in regard to Mrs. Edith Ayers of the Illinois Training School has been sent us, but from the monthly report published by that association we learn that she, too, was given fitting honor at the time of the last services at her home in Attica, Ohio. On May 26, the body lay in state at the First Methodist Church, of which she was a member. At the exercises, in addition to the words of the minister of the church, a short address was given by Harriet L. P. Friend, a member of the Ohio Board of Nurse Examiners, who represented the governor of the state. The honorary pall bearers were two members of the Red Cross Nursing Service Committee of Chicago, sixteen from the Columbus Committee, one member of the Illinois Training School Alumnae and one from the school itself. The business men's association presented an American flag made of flowers, which covered the casket, and a company of soldiers accompanied the body to the grave and fired a military salute. The public schools of Attica were closed for two days and the business houses were closed on the day of the funeral.

NURSES' CLINICS FOR PHYSICIANS

The American Medical Association at its sixty-eighth annual session, held in New York City, June 4th through 8th, gave to the nursing profession a chance to demonstrate many of its activities and procedures. The various hospitals were prepared during a definite period on given days to exhibit their most distinctive features. For example, one hospital from 2 to 6 p.m., displayed its amphitheatre for surgical operations and its central surgical supply room, where the patient was being prepared for operation, and also post operative nursing procedures. Another hospital featured its educational methods in nursing, lecture and demonstration rooms, science and dietetic laboratories, reference library, charts, drug cabinet, etc.; nurses' home; metabolism unit; the occupational activities of patients; and the kindergarten for convalescent children. Still another, a hospital for children, showed its observation and admission ward composed of plate glass cubicles, one crib in each, for isolation during observation period. This demonstration did not end with the hospital displays but extended into the District Nursing system. The New York Diet Kitchen featured its prenatal work, its baby welfare work and its general health and welfare work, with health conferences for children from two to six years old; cooking classes for mothers; social service activities and active coöperation with other district agencies; also the dispensing of certified milk. Another department opened its eye clinic, which is maintained in connection with school medical inspection.

These demonstrations were particularly interesting because they put the nursing profession in the attitude of instructors to the medical profession rather than the reverse, as is usually the case.

"THE SCHOOL NURSE"

The long-looked-for book on school nursing by Lina Rogers Struthers is just off the press of G. P. Putnam's Sons, as we write. Mrs. Struthers gives first a history of school inspection, then an outline in detail of the duties of the board, the medical officer and the school nurse, in a manner that is both interesting and instructive. She gives the different forms of blanks and charts that are necessary, which will simplify the work of organizing such a department in a new field.

Although Mrs. Struthers is a graduate of a Toronto school and has written her book in Toronto, which is now her home, her first work was done in this country and she made her reputation while a resident of the Henry Street Settlement in New York, where she was put for-

ward by Lillian D. Wald to try out the experiment of school nursing in New York City. Mrs. Struthers belongs equally to the United States and Canada, and her book is a valuable contribution to nursing literature.

THE PASSING OF BERTHA J. GARDNER

In just four years, lacking a month, from the time Miss Gardner left her home to assist in the reorganization work of the JOURNAL, caused by the change in the publishers, she was taken back to be buried. Death was caused by the lighting up of an old heart trouble that had evidently been of many years' standing.

The work for which the JOURNAL and the nursing profession must be most grateful to her is the increase in the subscription list, for which she was in part responsible and to which she devoted almost her entire time. After the period of reorganizing the business management of the JOURNAL had passed, Miss Gardner's work became more and more on the outside, that of speaking to classes of senior nurses or attending meetings of nursing associations.

We have been told that in her days of private nursing, Miss Gardner was a tower of strength in any home to which she was called. She was one of the pioneer workers for state registration in New Jersey, serving as president of the state association during the most critical period of state registration in this country. Although she was never prominent in the American Nurses' Association, more than to serve as a delegate from her state or alumnae association, she had a most comprehensive grasp of the nursing affairs of the whole country and an accurate memory for facts and dates which added tremendously to her value as a member of the editorial staff of this magazine.

Perhaps Miss Gardner was truly known only by those who lived near her, who could appreciate her thoughtfulness and her lovable characteristics. The one dread of nurses who have seen much of suffering is that of lingering illness and possible dependence on others. Miss Gardner's feeling on this point was so intense that, although her natural thrift had made provision for the future, she stayed at her desk long after she should have given up, and in spite of the wishes of those nearest her that she should spare herself. When no longer able to be at her desk she went to the Sanitarium at Clifton Springs, New York, drawn by the warm friendships she had made there at the time of her first breakdown in the late fall. During the last days her sisters and her close friend, Marietta B. Squire, were with her. To those who had watched her struggle with ill health and who had seen the smiling courage with which she faced death, there is a feeling of great thankfulness that the end came so quickly and so peacefully.